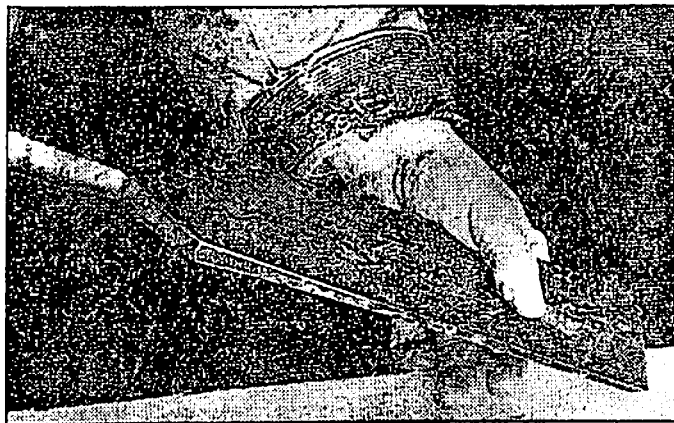


## Mayflower II to give insight into ship repair

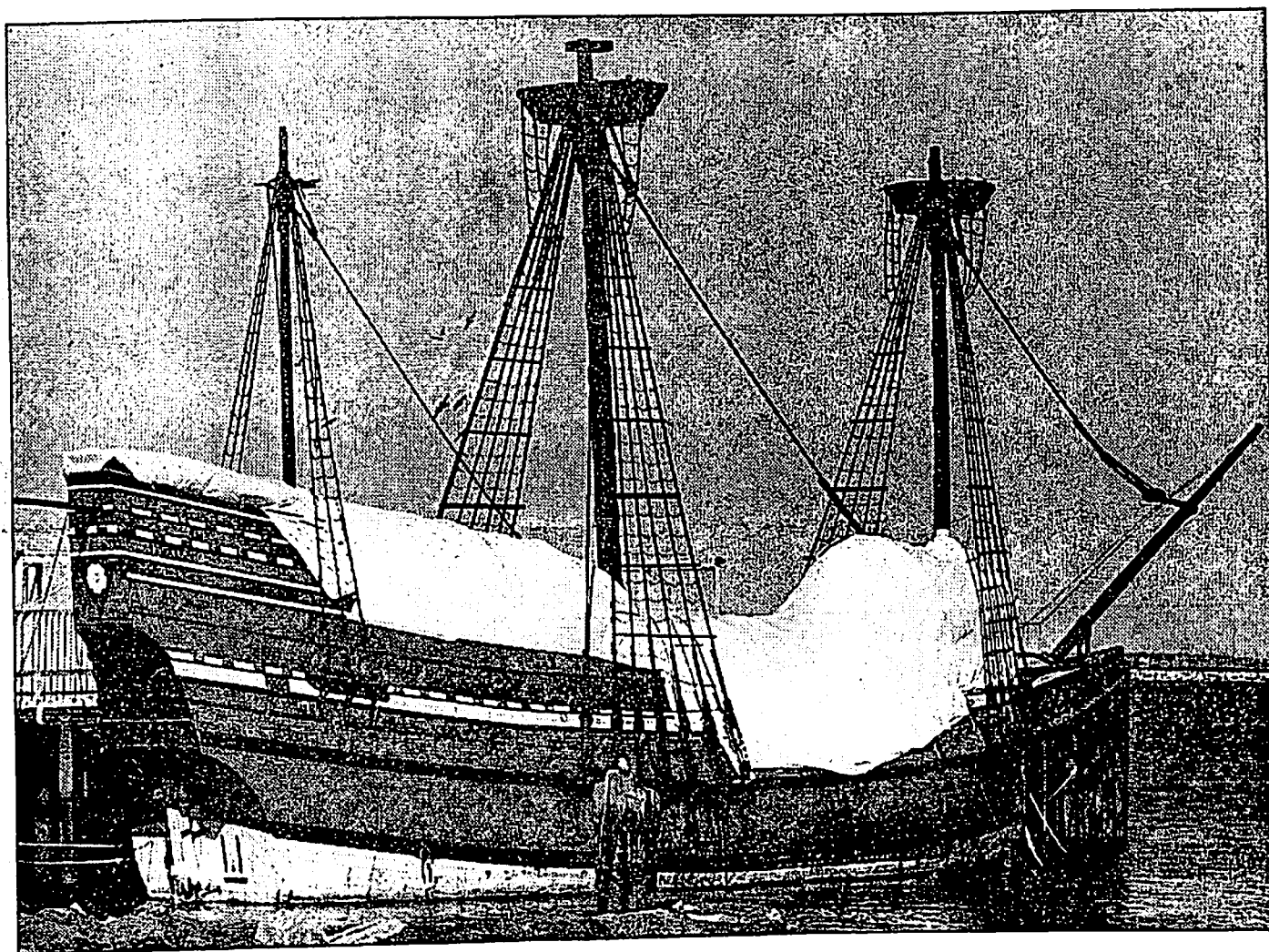
By Jody Feinberg  
The Patriot Ledger

Peter Arenstam  
trims a plank  
with a heavy  
chisel, known as  
a slick.



**W**ith a heavy chisel, Peter Arenstam stood aboard the Mayflower II, trimming a fresh plank. Later in the year, the plank will replace a damaged timber in the 40-year-old reproduction vessel, which is undergoing its first major refurbishment in more than a decade.

Instead of closing the ship for repairs, Plimoth Plantation opens its 50th season Saturday with a new Mayflower II exhibit centered on the repair project. Aboard the boat and on the pier, visitors can watch skilled artisans at work, and learn from interpreters about 17th and 20th century shipbuilding techniques.



"We get a lot of questions about how we build things, and do our interpretive programs," said Liz Lodge, vice president of museum operations. "This gives visitors a chance to see some of the things we do behind the scenes."

The Mayflower II is one of the oldest reproduction vessels in this country, and although it is in good shape, it needs numerous repairs that are expected to take two to three seasons and about \$600,000 to Lodge said. Some of this work is best done in warm weather, but officials had not wanted to interrupt the Mayflower II program that has run since 1980.

Until now, men and women dressed in 17th century costumes have portrayed actual

Please see MAYFLOWER — Page F2

## ■ MAYFLOWER

Continued from Page F1

Mayflower passengers, and told vivid stories in dialect of their journey across the ocean. Speaking in the first person, the men and women have lent an authenticity to the historic voyage. In the spirit of that era, they were unable to answer questions about the ship's making because they knew nothing about it.

"When the boat had first person interpreters, they couldn't answer these kinds of questions," said Carol City, the plantation's director of public relations. "This is an opportunity for visitors to learn about some new things."

A small part of the ship probably will continue to be staffed with first-person interpreters, but the main focus will be on the boat itself. About three or four artisans, along with interpreters, will be working and answering questions about the original Mayflower, as well as its reproduction.

"People will be able to see the way the ship is put together," said Arenstam, of Plymouth, who is overseeing the project for Plimoth Plantation.

To accompany the work, the museum has created a two-part exhibit on the pier where the boat is docked. The first focuses on 1620, the world of the Native Americans, the Pilgrims and the crossing of the original Mayflower. The second tells the story of the 20th century Mayflower II, which was built in England and sailed to Plymouth, arriving June 13, 1957, after a 55-day voyage.

In addition to a new coat of paint using pigments authentic to the 17th century, the Mayflower II will have repairs to its deck, interior furnishings, rigging, sails, hearth and cannons. Nearly all of the project will be done by museum artisans, which is less costly than contracting out the

work. Although 20th century techniques will be used mostly, some repairs will be done using 17th century methods.

All this work will be done in full view of the more than 2,000 visitors a day expected to visit at the height of the summer.

"The Mayflower II is very popular," said City. "Even if people haven't heard of Plimoth Plantation, they probably have read about the Mayflower. If they come to see Plymouth Rock, chances are they're going to go to the Mayflower."

The old exhibit on 1620 has been replaced by a more comprehensive, interactive one. For the first time, visitors will learn about the Native Americans and the European presence before the Pilgrims. Photographs, graphics and descriptive material also will tell the story of the Pilgrims' experience in England, Holland and on the ship.

"A lot of people think of the Pilgrims coming in 1620 as the first settlers," Lodge said. "They don't realize that people lived here for thousands of years before, and that Europeans came here before (but didn't settle)."

A section on 17th century ship-building and navigation has hands-on tools that will especially appeal to children. To get a sense of how sailors figured out where they were, visitors can use a crosstaff and sky murals. Count the knots on the chiplog to determine the boat's speed. There's also knot-tying and 4-foot cutouts of sailors that can be outfitted.

Returning to the pier from the ship, visitors will see artisans making oars, flags, furniture, a cannon carriage, a wooden pump, sails or other parts for the ship. Through 57 photographs spread over three walls, the story of the Mayflower II is told: its



Rosemary Lincoln/The Patriot Ledger  
**A 17th-century reproduction bell, one of many authentic features on the Mayflower II.**

construction, crossing and arrival in Plymouth. Having read journals and diaries, interpreters will be able to relate the human dimension.

The Mayflower II was built over two years in Devonshire, England, a collaboration between Plimoth Plantation and the English. Plimoth Plantation agreed to maintain and exhibit the ship and provide the advice and design of naval architect William Baker, whom it had commissioned; the English agreed to build the Mayflower II, sail it to Plymouth, and turn it over to the plantation.

The original Mayflower returned to England in May 1621 and was used for trade between London and France until 1624, when its owners declared it to be "in ruin."